



STATE OF WASHINGTON
WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
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August 20, 2003

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20554

Re: *Ex Parte* Communication, CC Docket No. 99-273

Dear Ms. Dortch:

We write to encourage the Federal Communications Commission to pursue the proposals made in this proceeding to remove barriers to competition in the market for directory assistance service.

Local exchange and long-distance companies in Washington state already have pricing flexibility under state law for their directory assistance services. The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission allowed this pricing flexibility based on the presence of alternative providers of the service. Our experience since then, however, has been less than satisfactory. Every company that has received pricing flexibility has increased its rates for directory assistance, including those whose rates were above long-run incremental cost at the time pricing flexibility was granted.

It appears that the full potential for competition in the directory assistance market will not be realized until dialing and billing issues are addressed. While we are open to addressing these issues at the state level, it may be that they can be addressed in a more cost-effective manner at the national level.

For the foregoing reasons, the WUTC urges the Federal Communications Commission promptly to adopt appropriate rules to promote competition in the wireline retail directory assistance market.

Respectfully submitted,

Marilyn Showalter
Chairwoman

Richard Hemstad
Commissioner

Patrick J. Oshie
Commissioner

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cc: Chairman Michael K. Powell
Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
Commissioner Jonathan S. Adelstein
Mr. William Maher
Ms. Michelle M. Carey
Mr. Gregory M. Cooke